

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 DAMASC 03207 031057Z
ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 SSM-03
HA-05 /075 W
-----068179 031105Z /11

P 031030Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8268
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USICA WASHDC
SECDEF WASHDC
DIA WASHDC

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE DAMASCUS 3207

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PEPR, SOPN, SY, LE
SUBJECT: ASSAD-SARKIS TALKS

1. WHILE WE HAVE HEARD FEW DETAILS OF THE ASSAD-SARKIS TALKS (MOST KEY MEETINGS WERE CLOSED DOOR SESSIONS BETWEEN THE TWO PRESIDENTS), THERE IS A BREATH OF RESTRAINED OPTIMISM IN THE AIR. OUR CONTACTS SEE CONDITIONS IN LEBANON MOVING, ALBEIT SLOWLY, IN SYRIA'S FAVOR TOWARD GREATER STABILITY. WE CAN'T PINPOINT MUCH EVIDENCE FOR THIS VAGUE OPTIMISM UNLESS IT SPRINGS FROM: (1) THE EXPECTATION OF ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, (2) ARAFAT'S COOPERATION AND UNUSUAL RESOLUTION
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 DAMASC 03207 031057Z

(SEPTEL), AND (3) EXPLOITABLE DIVISIONS WITHIN THE LEBANESE FRONT. WHATEVER THE UNDERLYING CAUSE THE SYRIAN PRESS HAS CLEARLY BEEN INSTRUCTED TO PLAY UP THE ASSAD-SARKIS TALKS AS A PORTENT OF BETTER DAYS AHEAD.

2. DOMINANT THEME IN ALL SYRIAN COVERAGE AND COMMENTARY OF ASSAD-SARKIS TALKS IN LATAKIA IS THE NEED TO SECURE

ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM SOUTH LEBANON AND AID PRESIDENT SARKIS IN EXTENDING HIS GOVERNMENT'S AUTHORITY OVER ALL OF LEBANON WHILE SAFEGUARDING THE PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE. -)-BAATH OF JUNE 2 HEADLINES: "COMPLETE AGREEMENT IN TALKS OF PRESIDENTS ASSAD AND SARKIS. PRESIDENT ASSAD: 'WE HAVE AGREED ON THE NEED FOR THE LEBANESE ARMY TO ENTER THE SOUTH. WE ARE ENDEAVORING TO ESTABLISH THE JURISDICTION OF THE LEBANESE STATE AND TO SAFEGUARD THE PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION.'"

3. EDITORIALS ON JUNE 1-2 DEAL ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY WITH THE SUMMIT TALKS. VIRTUALLY EVERY SUCH EDITORIAL SPEAKS OF THE NEED TO SECURE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM SOUTH LEBANON. ASSAD, HIMSELF, SPEAKS OF THE NEED FOR THE LEBANESE ARMY TO MOVE SOUTH, AND IMPLICITLY HINTED THAT SYRIA MAY CONSIDER EXPANDING THE AREA OF ITS FORCES OPERATIONS FURTHER SOUTH. HE NOTES IN HIS AIRPORT STATEMENT AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE TALKS THAT, "AT A PREVIOUS TIME WE HAD THE INTENTION OF ENTERING THE SOUTHERN REGIONS, BUT THE OPINION OF THE LEBANESE AUTHORITY THEN WAS (FOR US) TO STAY WHERE WE WERE... WE REMAINED ACCORDING TO THE DECISION OF THE LEBANESE AUTHORITY." A JUNE 1 TISHRIIN EDITORIAL BY JIBRAN KURIYYA SAYS THAT "SYRIAN WILL NOT HESITATE TO UNDERTAKE ANY ACTION OR MEASURE THAT PRESIDENT ELIAS SARKIS MAY SEE FIT FOR SECURING ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND CONSOLIDATING SECURITY THROUGHOUT ALL OF LEBANON'S TERRITORIES." A JUNE 2 EDITORIAL BY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 DAMASC 03207 031057Z

THE SAME AUTHOR STATES THAT, "SYRIA, FOR ITS PART, WILL EXTEND ALL NECESSARY ASSISTANCE TO LEBANON TO ENSURE EVERYTHING WHICH WOULD BRING ABOUT ISRAEL'S WITHDRAWAL.

4. THAWRA ON JUNE 2 DISPLAYS EVEN MORE BRAVADO ON THE SUBJECT. IN REFERRING TO SOUTH LEBANON IT ASSERTS THAT IN THE ABSENCE OF AN EFFECTIVE LEBANESE FORCE AND IN VIEW OF THE UN'S "INABILITY TO RESOLVE MATTERS IN FAVOR OF A UNIFIED LEBANON AND IN ORDER TO STRIP ISRAEL OF THE AGGRESSIVE AND HOSTILE PRETEXTS TO WHICH IT HAS CLUNG TO REMAIN IN THE AREA...", "THE ADF IS CAPABLE OF HELPING PRESIDENT SARKIS RESOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF THE SOUTH. "ON THIS BASIS THE ZIONIST ENEMY WILL FIND ITSELF COMPELLED TO CARRY OUT THIS COMMITMENT (JUNE 13 WITHDRAWAL)."

5. THE OTHER MAIN THEME OF EDITORIAL COMMENTARY IS THE COMPATIBILITY OF SYRIA'S COMMITMENT TO HELP RESTORE LEBANON'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE ENTIRE COUNTRY WITH ITS OBLIGATIONS TO THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE. TISHRIIN EDITORIAL OF JUNE 2 WARNS; "IF THERE ARE CERTAIN PARTIES TRYING TO CREATE THE ILLUSION THAT RECONCILIATION BETWEEN LEBANESE

SOVEREIGNTY AND THE AUTHORITY OF THE LEBANESE STATE AND THE PRESENCE, SURVIVAL, AND SAFETY OF THE PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION IS IMPOSSIBLE, THESE ATTEMPTS SERVE NEITHER LEBANON'S INTEREST NOR THE INTEREST OF THE PALESTINE CAUSE; NOR DO THEY SERVE THE CONTENTION THAT THE SECURITY OF THE PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION NECESSARILY DEMANDS THAT LEBANESE SOVEREIGNTY BE CIRCUMVENTED. THE AUTHORITY OF THE LEBANESE STATE THROUGHOUT LEBANON'S TERRITORIES AND LEBANON'S SUCCESS IN CONSOLIDATING THE DEFENSE OF ITS FRONTIERS IS IN THE INTEREST OF ALL ARABS, INCLUDING THE PALESTINIANS. AND FOR THE PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION TO ADHERE TO AGREEMENTS CONCLUDED IS IN THE INTEREST OF THE ARAB STRUGGLE AGAINST ISRAELI EXPANSIONISM AND AGGRESSION." THE EDITORIAL CLAIMS THAT SYRIAN WITH ITS LINKS TO BOTH THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 04 DAMASC 03207 031057Z

LEBANESE AND PALESTINIANS WILL "BE AN ELEMENT FOR BRINGING THE TWO SIDES CLOSER TOGETHER."

6. FINALLY, A NUMBER OF EDITORIALS SEEK TO EXPLAIN SYRIA'S INTENSE INVOLVEMENT IN LEBANON'S AFFAIRS. ISHRIIN ON JUNE 1 STATES: "IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO REGARD WHAT SYRIA HAS OFFERED TO LEBANON AS A FAVOR, FOR JUST AS LEBANON NEEDS SYRIA...SYRIA NEEDS LEBANON'S SUPPORT, ASSISTANCE, AND UNDERSTANDING FOR THE GREAT NATIONALIST MISSION SHE IS UNDERTAKING IN DEFENSE OF THE INTERESTS OF SYRIA AND THE ARAB NATION..." A THAWRA EDITORIAL DECLARES THAT, "LEBANON'S SECURITY IS PART AND PARCEL OF SYRIA'S SECURITY." PELLETREAU

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, CHIEFS OF STATE MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978DAMASC03207
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780232-1065
Format: TEL
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780699/aaaadhpl.tel
Line Count: 149
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 334dbe92-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2502166
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ASSAD-SARKIS TALKS
TAGS: PEPR, SOPN, SY, LE, (AL-ASSAD, HAFIZ), (SARKIS, ELIAS)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/334dbe92-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014